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Solid Waste Regulations Become Stricter *Legislative package passed today by Senate*

LANSING—Solid waste regulations and inspections of landfills and transported waste will increase, state Sen. Tom George (R-Texas Twp) announced today after the Senate overwhelmingly passed a 14-bill bipartisan package.

“I fully support this package to protect our citizens from public health threats they may face when inappropriate waste is disposed of in Michigan’s landfills,” George said. “It provides measures to revise Michigan’s solid waste management program to protect our environment and natural resources.”

The bills include the following key provisions:

- Authorizes the state Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to establish a statewide inspection program, which would mandate at least four inspections each year of each landfill to ensure compliance. Random inspections would also be conducted to help ensure compliance.
- Starting Oct. 1, 2004, landfills would be required to refuse waste, regardless of its source, that did not meet Michigan’s stringent waste standards.
- Adds two important new landfill bans—beverage containers and whole tires—to further reduce reliance on landfills and encourage recycling.
- Grants the DEQ director emergency power to prohibit any waste shipment that poses a threat to the public’s health or safety or to the safety of the environment.
- Adds new fines, of up to \$25,000 per day, for violating certain laws related to disposing of waste in landfills.
- Mandates a 2-year moratorium on issuing certain new landfill permits.
- Two resolutions urge Congress to act to allow states to control the flow and deposit of out-of-state waste.

“These bills end the double-standard which held Michigan-generated waste to a higher standard than out- of-state trash,” George said. “This is a mechanism through which Michigan can reduce out-of-state trash importation.”